

Just Believe

David Edgren



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Chapter 1

The Colours

I'd still be dead if not for Jesus.

That probably seems like a strange way to start a story. And, for most people, it would be. But for me it's true.

I died when I was 12 years old. And then I was alive again. The first thing I saw when I came back to life was Jesus. So I guess you can imagine how I feel about Him. I love Jesus! I talk about Him all the time.

My name is Talitha and I am 15 years old now.

Less than a week after my 10th birthday, I felt a pain in my head. It was a small pain compared to what I would feel in the next two years. But, on that day, it was the worst thing I'd ever felt.

I'd had headaches before. But this was different. I saw flashes of light. The white flashes fragmented into coloured dots and spun all around me. When I closed my eyes, the spinning prism of coloured lights filled my vision. It was like being inside a rainbow. It would have been beautiful if it wasn't so painful. It hurt. A lot.

That first day, I had to sit down for a few minutes. I'd been helping Mama make bread for Sabbath when the colours came.

I cried out in pain and grabbed my head. Mama guided me to a

chair.

“What is it, little one?” Mama said, still holding me. “Are you alright?” They had called me “little one” for as long as I could remember. It was a play on my name. Talitha means “little girl.”

“I’m OK,” I said. “It’s just a headache, I think.” The pain had gone almost as quickly as it had come. I looked around wondering about the flashes of light I had seen.

“The colours are gone,” I said. “Now I just feel tired and a bit dizzy.”

“The colours?” Mama asked.

I explained the sudden stab of pain behind my eyes and the exploding rainbow of coloured light that came with it.

Mama said she’d seen lights like that once when she hit her head. She’d been cleaning the floor under the table when someone knocked at the door. She stood up quickly and smacked the back of her head on the table. That’s when she saw the colours. Then she crawled out from under the table and answered the door, still sitting on the floor. It was a neighbour lady who quickly dipped a cloth in water and held it to where Mama had hit her head.

“But I didn’t hit my head!” I said.

“I know, little one,” Mama replied. “We will talk to Papa about it when he gets home.”

After a minute or two, I was up and helping Mama again. The

colours and the pain were barely a memory by the time Papa came home. I think we mentioned it, but I really can't remember.

It was at least a month before I saw the colours again. The second time was much like the first: sudden, painful and over quickly.

I wasn't stuck in my bed until just after my 12th birthday. By that time, I was seeing the colours many times each day. The pain still came and went as quickly as the colours. But I was so tired.

Every time I saw the colours, the pain would make me tired. It wasn't the kind of tired you feel after carrying a water bucket up a hill. And it wasn't the kind of tired you feel after counting backward from 100 to zero. It was a different kind of tired.

The best way I can explain it is that it's the kind of tired you feel when you wake up right after you fall asleep and your eyes are half open but you can't open them the rest of the way. You feel heavy. And then you can't go back to sleep.

I was tired of the pain. I was tired of the colours. And I was tired of being tired.

Papa knew lots of people and he talked to all of them about me. Every doctor from our village and villages nearby came to see me. They all asked the same questions. And they all gave the same answer.

"Rest is best," they said. "Talitha should stay in bed. The more rest she gets, the quicker she will heal."

So I started spending more time in bed. Every time the colours came,

I would go to bed and rest. Sometimes it worked. I would wake feeling better and get up to help Mama around the house. Other times, I would see the colours in my dreams and I would wake with a scream.

I tried to stay quiet at night. Some nights, I could make it until sunrise before calling out in pain. I didn't want to wake Mama and Papa. But, as it got worse, I couldn't help it. I would cry out and Mama and Papa would come running together.

In the last month before I died, Mama and Papa were taking turns coming when I cried. They needed their sleep too.

The night before I met Jesus, Mama never left my bed. She sat next to me and played with my hair all night. It felt nice, when I wasn't lost in the colours and pain.

Even though Mama was there to comfort me, it was hard to fall asleep. But then, as the morning was growing warm, I did.



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